

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2032

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USDOC WASHDC

USUN NEW YORK 2499

US DEPT AGRICULTURE WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 2499

ATHENS FOR AGATT

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UNGA, EFIN, EEWT, CSCE, SCUL, EAGR, PR, BU

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF US-BULGARIAN RELATIONS

REF: A) STATE 277519; B) SOFIA 1669; C) STATE 281373; D) SOFIA 2110;

E) STATE 151293; F) STATE 280216; G) STATE 242714;

H) SOFIA 2123; I) STATE 259708

1. SUMMARY AND COMMENT. IN PERIODIC REVIEW OF PENDING ITEMS AND
POSSIBLE FUTURE MOVES IN US-BULGARIAN RELATIONS,
WE COVERED CSCE, PUERTO RICO, BONDHOLDERS, APPOINTMENTS,
AGRICULTURE DELEGATION, COMMERCIAL OFFICES, TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS,
SIGNING OF CULTURAL AGREEMENT, AND ZHIVKOVA VISIT.

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AMB CHERNEV (HEAD OF FOURTH DEPARTMENT MFA), WHOM WE

HAVE FOUND TO BE A "CAN DO" OFFICIAL, NOT ONLY UNDERTOOK TO GET THESE MATTERS SETTLED BUT OBSERVED THAT HE THOUGHT US-BULGARIAN RELATIONS COULD NOW MOVE FROM DISCUSSION OF MINOR IRRITANTS AND PENDING MATTERS TO REAL "ACTIVATION" OF US-BULGARIAN RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. IN CONNECTION WITH DEMARCHE AS PER REF A (REPORTED SEPTEL), AMB NOV 23 TOOK OCCASION TO REVIEW PENDING MATTERS WITH AMB CHERNEV AND TO DISCUSS HOW NORMALIZATION COULD FURTHER PROCEED. FOLLOWING TOPICS WERE COVERED.

3. CSCE. AS MATTER SEPARATE FROM DEMARCHE ON THE CSCE "COMMISSION", AMB RECALLED (REF B) THAT DEPUTY MINISTER TSVETKOV HAD AGREED THAT ANOTHER REVIEW SESSION ON CSCE WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER, SUCH AS WE HAD HAD LAST DECEMBER, WOULD BE USEFUL. CHERNEV THOUGHT THIS VERY CONSTRUCTIVE AND UNDERTOOK TO ARRANGE IT DURING WEEK IMMEDIATELY BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

4. PUERTO RICO. EXPLAINED ELECTION OUTCOME IN ACCORDANCE REF C, AND LEFT A PAPER WITH CHERNEV, STRESSING THAT THE PR SOCIALIST PARTY WHICH OBTAINED ONE PERCENT OF THE VOTE IS THE ONE THAT IS MAKING ALL THE NOISE IN THE COMMITTEE OF 24. CHERNEV CLAIMED, THIS TIME WITH MORE DETAIL, THAT BULGARIANS HAD BEEN HELPFUL IN COMMITTEE OF 24 "IN PROCEDURAL WAYS" IN KEEPING ISSUE FROM COMING TO A VOTE. HE SAID THERE HAD BEEN "SEVERAL" MOVES BY BULGARIAN REP, AND THAT "SEVERAL" MESSAGES HAD BEEN DISPATCHED TO HIM (CF. REF D).

5. BONDHOLDERS. IN ACCORDANCE REFS E AND F, AMB REMINDED CHERNEV THAT THIS MATTER HAD BEEN POSTPONED AGAIN AND AGAIN, MENTIONING THAT AMB POPOV HAD EXPECTED DELEGATION TO GO TO NY FIRST IN SEPTEMBER, THEN IN OCTOBER, THEN IN NOVEMBER. CHERNEV HYPOTHESIZED THERE MAY HAVE BEEN RELUCTANCE TO TALK BEFORE OUR ELECTIONS. AMB REPLIED THIS MATTER OF NEGOTIATING WITH PRIVATE BODY (IN WHICH USG OF COURSE HAS DEFINITE INTEREST), AND ENTIRELY UNRELATED TO TRANSITION TO NEW GOVT. ON THE CONTRARY, BULGARIANS HAVE INTEREST IN GETTING NEGOTIATIONS WELL UNDER WAY BE-

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FORE NEW ADMINISTRATION TAKES A LOOK AT STATE OF US-GOB RELATIONS. STRESSED WE NEED AT LEAST TWO WEEKS ADVANCE NOTICE BEFORE DEL CAN BE PROPERLY RECEIVED. CHERNEV SAID HE UNDERSTOOD AND AGREED, AND WOULD TAKE STEPS TO ACTIVATE THE MATTER. COMMENT: DEPT PLEASE NOTIFY AMB TORBERT.

6. APPOINTMENTS. AMB NOTED A CERTAIN SLOWING-DOWN IN RESPONSIVENESS TO OUR REQUESTS FOR APPOINTMENTS AT MINIS-

TERIAL AND EQUIVALENT LEVELS, E.G. WE HAVE OUTSTANDING SINCE JULY REQUEST TO SEE FINANCE MINISTER BELCHEV. CHERNEV SAID NO POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE SHOULD BE ATTACHED TO THIS, AND HE WOULD SEE THAT THE RIGHT THINGS ARE DONE.

7. AGRICULTURAL DELEGATION. EMPHASIZING THAT WE ARE NOT PUSHING THIS MATTER, AMB MENTIONED THAT BULGARIANS WHO ORIGINALLY HAD PLANNED TO SEND DELEGATION IN JULY, HAD THEN POSTPONED VISIT TO OCTOBER, AFTER WHICH NOTHING HAD BEEN HEARD. EMPHASIZED (WHAT WE THINK MIN AGRIC UNDERSTANDS) THAT RECEPTION OF THIS TECHNICAL-LEVEL DELEGATION NOT AFFECTED BY BUTZ RESIGNATION.

8. COMMERCIAL OFFICES. AGAIN STRESSING THAT TIMING IS MATTER FOR BULGARIANS TO DECIDE, WE NOTED DEPT IS STILL AWAITING OFFICIAL BULGARIAN NOTIFICATION OF THEIR CHOICE OF SAN FRANCISCO (REFS G AND H). CHERNEV THOUGHT THIS WAS DUE TO A BUREAUCRATIC SNAFU IN SOFIA, UNDERTOOK TO GET MATTER CLEARED UP, AND THANKED US FOR BRINGING IT TO HIS ATTENTION.

9. LIFTING OF TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS. WE RECALLED US HAD FIRST PROPOSED THIS LAST JANUARY, HAD PROVIDED CLARIFICATIONS REQUESTED BY BULGARIANS IN OCTOBER, AND HAD HEARD NOTHING SINCE. MENTIONED THAT HUNGARY AND US HAVE MEANWHILE AGREED TO LIFT SIMILAR RESTRICTIONS. BALL NOW IN BULGARIAN COURT. CHERNEV THANKED AND SAID HE WOULD LOOK INTO MATTER.

10. CULTURAL AGREEMENT - PAPAZOV VISIT. AMBASSADOR RECALLED PREVIOUS DISCUSSION OF PAPAZOV VISIT TO US TO WHICH WE LOOKED FORWARD. ALSO NOTED THAT CULTURAL AGREEMENT NEGOTIATION HAD BEEN CONCLUDED, PROGRAM NEGOTIATION WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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TO BEGIN DECEMBER 8 WITH GOOD PROSPECT OF QUICK AGREEMENT. THIS PRESENTED OPTION OF EITHER HAVING PAPAZOV SIGN CULTURAL AGREEMENT AND PROGRAM DOCUMENT DURING HIS VISIT (PRESUMABLY IN SPRING) OR, IF GOB PREFERRED, TO SIGN BOTH IN SOFIA AT EARLIER DATE, IN WHICH CASE PAPAZOV COULD SIGN NSF-CSTPHE AGREEMENT IN WASHINGTON. WE WISHED TO SOLICIT GOB VIEWS AS TO WHAT IT SAW AS MOST DESIRABLE, AND IN ANY CASE WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE GOB SUGGESTIONS AS TO DATES FOR PAPAZOV VISIT.

11. ZHIVKOVA VISIT. INFORMED CHERNEV THAT WE HAD HEARD MME. ZHIVKOVA PLANS TO OPEN THRACIAN EXHIBIT IN NEW YORK JUNE 11 AND THAT WE HAD SUGGESTED SHE CONTINUE IN US FOR A WHILE AS GUEST OF THE USG. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO OFFICIAL INFORMATION FROM WASHINGTON YET, WE ARE THINK-

ING IN TERMS OF A THREE-WEEK STAY DURING WHICH SHE MIGHT ALSO BE ABLE TO PLAY A ROLE AT BULGARIAN CULTURAL EVENT THAT MAY BE PUT ON BY THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, AS DISCUSSED BY DR. BOORSTIN DURING HIS NOV 21-23 VISIT HERE.

12. ACTIVATION OF RELATIONS. CHERNEV SAID HE THOUGHT THE TIME IS RIGHT TO MOVE FROM STAGE OF REMOVING IRRITANTS AND SETTLING MINOR MATTERS, TO A MORE PURPOSEFUL "ACTIVATION" OF RELATIONS BETWEEN BULGARIA AND THE US. HE THEREFORE PROMISED TO HELP TO GET THE "LITTLE THINGS" OUT OF THE WAY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, SO THAT FUTURE MEETINGS -- SUCH AS THE ONE ON CSCE -- COULD DEAL MORE WITH BROADER POLICY MATTERS.
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